

## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

# MINNESOTA STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

OCTOBER 1, 2016 — SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

# WHAT IS THE MINNESOTA STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL?

The Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council (MNSILC) is authorized under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Members are appointed by the governor to provide guidance to Minnesota’s independent living services. The council’s main responsibilities are to develop, monitor, review, and evaluate a State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). For more information on the council, including how to join, see the MNSILC website at [mn.gov/deed/silc](https://mn.gov/deed/silc).

## MNSILC Mission

The Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council advances the philosophy of independent living and promotes the integration and full inclusion of people with disabilities into Minnesota communities.

## MNSILC Vision

The Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council will engage Minnesota communities to recognize and champion the critical needs of people with disabilities and promote statewide coverage by Centers for Independent Living.

### Council Members

Heather Allyn	Mary Koep	Anita Olson
Jessica Andrist	Meredith Kujala	Shelly Pflaum
Tammie Campbell	Gloria LaFriniere	Mark Smaaladen
Melissa Doherty	Linda Lingen	Renee Solomon Wise
Rose Ann Faber	James Lovold	Randy Sorensen
David Fenley	Larry Lura	Annette Toews
Kim Hicks	Mitzi Mellot	Brian Wagner
Zainab Jama	Cynthia Moore	Brad Westerlund

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

It was a year of endings, a year of beginnings, and a year of change. We lost Cynthia Moore, a faithful member in her sixth year of service to the council. Her sudden death left a spot that will not be easily filled. She was a strong advocate and embodied the independent living philosophy. Her work as the chair of the Outreach Committee and her commitment to have individuals with disabilities be heard through the Olmstead Decision and subsequent plan was irreplaceable. We wish her family well.

Ten new members joined MNSILC in January. Our note taker resigned, and a new note taker started. Even with so many new faces on the committee, we planned and completed many opportunities for education on and in the independent living philosophy.

We had a successful professional development conference for council members, the staff of Centers for Independent Living (CILs), State Services for the Blind (SSB), Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), and others involved with the Independent Living movement in Minnesota. Members attended the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) Conference, Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Congress, and the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) Conference. These national conferences are not only a great way to learn promising new practices and different ways of approaching shared issues, but are also a way to connect with other SILCs and CILs and learn from each other. A member also attended an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) presentation for businesses put on by Minnesota Council on Disability (MCD).

My deepest thanks to our council members who worked many hours to improve independent living in Minnesota, and to our partners, the eight CILs in Minnesota, for their unending attention to providing the services and supports that assist Minnesotans with disabilities to live lives of independence in our communities. Thank you as well to our designated state entity, VRS, and to SSB for their ongoing partnership and support of the council. Please join me as we journey through 2017 in this report.

Gratefully,

*Heather J. Allyn*



Heather Allyn



## PROGRESS ON STATE PLAN FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (SPIL) GOALS

Once every three years MNSILC, in collaboration with Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and other state partners, is required by federal law to report on progress toward reaching the goals outlined in the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). This year completes the first year in the 2017-2019 SPIL cycle. MNSILC is directed to monitor the implementation and evaluate the progress of the SPIL. The SPIL then guides the work of the Independent Living (IL) Program to improve independent living for Minnesotans with disabilities. CILs have had



*MNSILC members worked to accomplish many things supporting Independent Living in 2017.*

great success locally in getting the word out about who they are and what they do. We feel that joint efforts between programs will build upon those successes, reinforcing them and building greater recognition. Further, funding continues to be an issue for CILs. A recent study indicated that CILs do not receive adequate funding to fully serve their areas, therefore affecting statewide access to IL services and supports. Focusing on statewide efforts will assist legislators in understanding not only the need for services, but also the funding required to meet those needs. Below is the progress made on the SPIL this year.

### GOAL A: Strengthen the infrastructure of Minnesota's Independent Living Program

#### Objective A-1: Strengthen the CIL Network

**In progress:** Progress was made as MNSILC, CILs and VRS representatives worked collaboratively statewide and federally to seek additional funding that would help Minnesota better serve the areas assigned to each center. We were successful in getting an additional \$500,000 annually from the State Legislature. A return on investment document was written as part of that.

#### Objective A-2: Expand the diversity and capacity of the MNSILC so that the council is in a better position to fulfill its statutory duties as defined under WIOA

**In progress:** Good progress was made in this area:

A new recruitment brochure was developed and printed. Plans were made to attend one job fair and one conference in the next year with the intention of recruitment as well as building community awareness. A survey of knowledge/skills/connections was done with current members. MNSILC had ten training opportunities for members this year. Our annual report was printed and circulated.

#### Objective A-3: Strengthen the partnership between DEED/VRS, SSB, MNSILC, and CILs

**In progress:** Initial steps were taken on the activities under this objective.

Half of the directors of CILs attended the professional development conference. Each center sent a number of staff to the conference. Joint efforts have continued around branding and return on investment. Collaborative work occurred in the drafting of a legislative packet for 2017.

## GOAL B: Minnesotans have access to IL services statewide

### **Objective B-1: Develop and implement a plan/strategy for universal recognition**

**In progress:** Significant activity occurred around developing an IL brand. An introductory session was held during the professional development conference and a short survey taken. An IL network phone conference to discuss additional feedback and results of the survey took place. Planning for next steps also occurred.

### **Objective B-2: Recognize IL Philosophy**

**Not started:** Branding was more complicated and time consuming than anticipated. The committee anticipates beginning this work in the coming year.

### **Objective B-3: Energize the disability community to advocate for themselves**

**In progress:** A unique opportunity presented itself as three of the centers received grants that would help build community engagement and leadership among people with disabilities. MNSILC continues to follow the progress closely.

## GOAL C: Position MNSILC/CILs as Leaders and Champions of Independent Living

### **Objective C-1: Create a shared public policy agenda for IL in Minnesota**

**In progress:** With the unanticipated length of time some objectives/activities would take, progress has been minimal. Developing a packet of educational materials for legislators and making visits was an initial step. We anticipate more progress on this during the coming year.

### **Objective C-2: Expand the MNSILC/CIL legislative influence through educational contacts or opportunities in communities**

**In progress:** Network of centers took on the role of a legislative committee. Council members received training, both internally and the at the professional development conference, on legislative process and contacting legislators. MNSILC and MACIL worked collaboratively to develop an educational packet for legislators, and select MNSILC members met with federal legislators as part of their attendance at the NCIL Conference. MNSILC and MACIL are also in the process of setting an appointment with the governor's office. MNSILC and MACIL developed a request for the governor to proclaim January 23 to be Ed Roberts Day – named for the pioneering disability rights activist and father of the independent living movement. Activities promoted community awareness.

## Moving into 2018

MNSILC anticipates additional progress on completing the current State Plan report. In addition, MNSILC will begin planning for the development of the 2020-2022 State Plan. MNSILC will be seeking community feedback before and during the process, so watch our website for opportunities. [mn.gov/deed/silc](https://mn.gov/deed/silc)

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2017



*Martin Castro provided the keynote speech on day one.*



*Henry Emmons provided the keynote speech on day two.*



*Cynthia Moore and Linda Lingen share results of MNSILC's Comprehensive Needs Assessment.*



*Staff from Access North CIL attending the professional development conference.*

MNSILC hosted a professional development conference June 13-14 in Bloomington, MN. Registration was open to CIL executive directors and staff, MNSILC members, IL staff from VRS and SSB, as well as interested others. Approximately 120 people registered for the conference.

This conference was identified in our current State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) to help us meet the objective of strengthening the partnership between DEED/VRS, SSB, and MNSILC. The theme for the conference was, "Building Skills to Meet Challenges of Independent Living". Topics were determined through a short survey provided to MNSILC members and Center staff. The goal of the conference task force was to make sure the professional development conference was affordable and accessible and to ensure that the speakers' subjects were relevant to providing the staff and council members helpful, energizing information.

Marty Castro, an attorney who is president of Castro Synergies and former chairman of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, presented the keynote on the first day of the conference, focusing on the civil rights of people with disabilities. Dr. Henry Emmons, a psychiatrist who practices with Partners in Resilience, provided the keynote on the second day, speaking about stress reduction and resilience. Other conference session topics included:

- CIL core services and unique services provided by CILs
- Serving people who are older and needing additional adaptations and services in order to remain in a home of their choosing
- Assistive technology
- Services to youth
- The needs of diverse populations
- Home accessibility
- Legislative action in 2017 that affects people with disabilities
- Homelessness and the ADA.

During a working lunch, Mike Morris of Morris and Associates, LLC and Jesse Bethke Gomez, executive director of the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living (MCIL), did a presentation on the branding of Independent Living. A short survey was given to gather ideas about branding. This information is being used as we continue to work on developing a brand for IL in Minnesota.

Attendees reported having had a wonderful experience. We also conducted a short electronic survey asking about the conference. Overall, there was a very high rate of satisfaction.

# DISABILITY: A GLOBAL COMMUNITY



*The Minnesota SILC members joined visitors from Cambodia and Japan in the Hart Senate Building after visiting with Minnesota's Senate staff.*

In July 2017, two MNSILC members attended the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) Conference in Washington, D.C., where they had the privilege of meeting international people who attended the conference. Visitors from Cambodia and Japan accompanied them as they met with legislators on Capitol Hill. During their time together, they talked a lot about their hopes and dreams for people with disabilities in their countries.

In the United States, the disability community has worked to preserve their right to live the way they choose and to have access to all the opportunities that others enjoy: work, school, community, and even their homes. They have fought to live as independently and productively as they are able to with community supports. They continue to fight to maintain what they have gained through years of hard work.

Council members met many people at the conference who are leaders in formulating ideas and ideals of how people with disabilities want to be viewed and treated in their countries. Beyond the barriers of language and culture, the similarity of their goals and experiences is striking. The visitors expressed the same desires as people in the U.S. to be viewed beyond their disability: to have choices about where they live and what they do, to have independent access to their homes and communities.

In the United States, we know that disability cuts across all demographic categories. From the experiences at the NCIL Conference, we understand that disability encompasses all nations, making the disability community a global community of shared struggles, experiences, and dreams.



*A young advocate, Chip Allyn, has accompanied his mom, Heather Allyn (MNSILC chair), to Washington D.C. for the past three years. Chip has marched in the annual March to the Capitol and visited with legislators from Minnesota. This year Chip made his own sign for the National Council On Independent Living (NCIL) March, participating with over 800 other members from SILCs and CILs.*



## A FIFTH CORE SERVICE: TRANSITION

The passage in 2014 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) mandated that Centers for Independent Living must provide a fifth core service: Transition. This new core service contained three parts: **1)** nursing home (or other institutional level living) relocation, **2)** services to prevent an institutional level placement, and **3)** transition for youth. Youth is defined (in WIOA) as a person 18-24 years of age who has graduated from high school or otherwise left school who did or would have qualified for services under IDEA. In addition to serving this age group, many centers were already providing some services to younger transition aged youth still in school.

### **Transition for Youth in Southeastern Minnesota**

The Southeastern Minnesota Center for Independent Living (SEMCIL) has a historically strong youth transition program, and that program has been expanded with the mandate of transition services to youth as a core service.

SEMCIL provides transition services to 11 counties in southeastern Minnesota, focusing primarily on working with transition-aged youth through partnerships with transitional programs in its catchment area. In the first 10 months of 2017, SEMCIL partnered with 16 schools and served 202 people through transition services. The transition program not only works with students in high school but also helps establish community connections young people can utilize later in life. SEMCIL provides transition services to out-of-school youth, including college preparation, pre-employment services, and independent living skills.

Services in transition are accomplished through classroom-style group work and individual supports based on the needs of the individual being served. Teams work with students to identify areas where they feel they need support, whether job searching, college prep, or general independent living skills. For example, staff recently worked with a youth who had never been employed and was seeking a summer part-time job to increase his work skills. He identifies as a person with autism and was struggling to find employment. The team assisted him with

a job search, identifying a potential job match at the Boys and Girls Club, which was hiring for parks crew clean up. SEMCIL worked with the young man to obtain an application and prepare for the interview, which resulted in him successfully obtaining employment. He is now employed at his first job ever. He continues to attend “What is Work” and he’s building a resume and learning additional job skills.

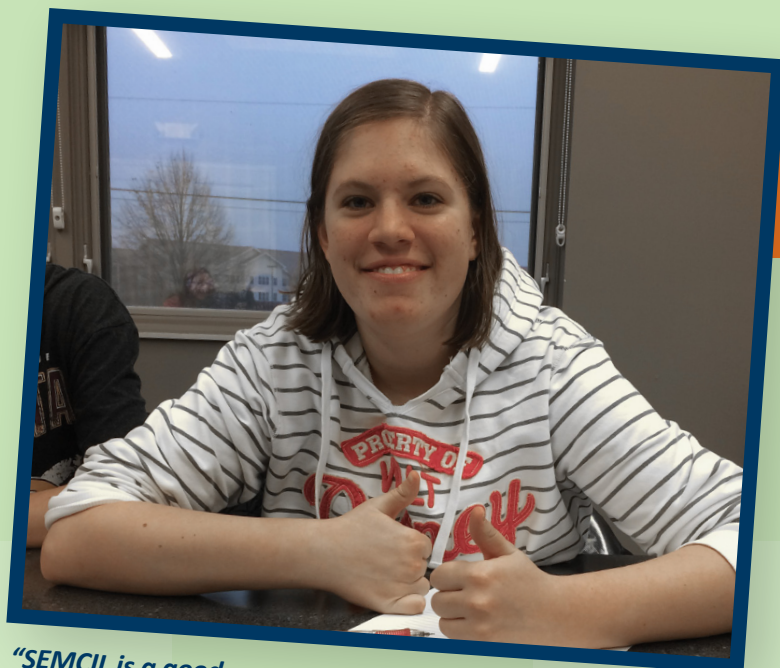
SEMCIL staff have supported students in the transition from high school to college providing services such as developing skills in time management and strong study habits, or offering counsel and guidance with social issues that may present themselves when a person arrives at a college campus. Additionally, as a Center for Independent Living, they remain available to provide supports later in life for whatever individuals may need to live their lives as independently as possible.

SEMCIL values its partnerships with the schools and teachers, without whom they would not be able to reach the number of students that they do. They offer training right in the classroom and do so either weekly or every other week throughout the school year. Furthermore, because of key partnerships that SEMCIL has with other providers, they can assist the students in building a foundational support with county case management or Vocational Rehabilitation Services as two examples.

SEMCIL’S work with Vocational Rehabilitation Services is critical to its success as a Center for Independent Living. Whether addressing work and benefit topics through collaboration or meeting the needs of providers through work completed in association with WIOA, the partnership provides both direct and indirect opportunities to meet people with disabilities and assist them in developing plans to help them live more independently. The missions of both organizations are aligned to empower people with disabilities. There is not a better partner for SEMCIL to work with to meet the needs of all persons with disabilities in southeastern Minnesota, whether through transition services or the other core service offerings available.



# TRANSITION FOR YOUTH IN SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA

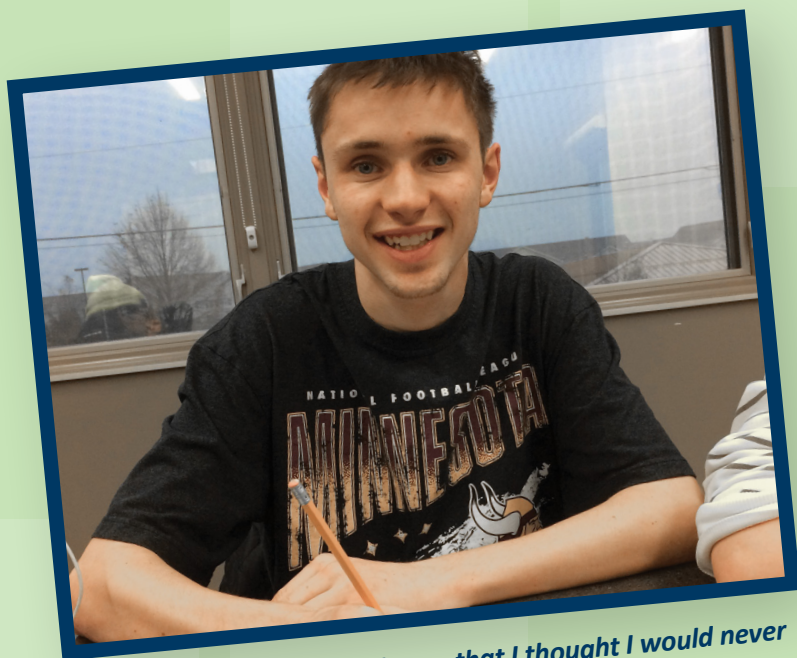


*"SEMCIL is a good program for people with disabilities that help you if you want to move out, learn how to cook, grocery shop, manage money and other good classes."  
– Stephanie*

## SEMCIL Transition Services: Consumer Comments



*"SEMCIL has done so much for me such as teaching me about writing checks, making budgets, and learning the basics of driving. All things I will need to learn for the community."  
– Parker*

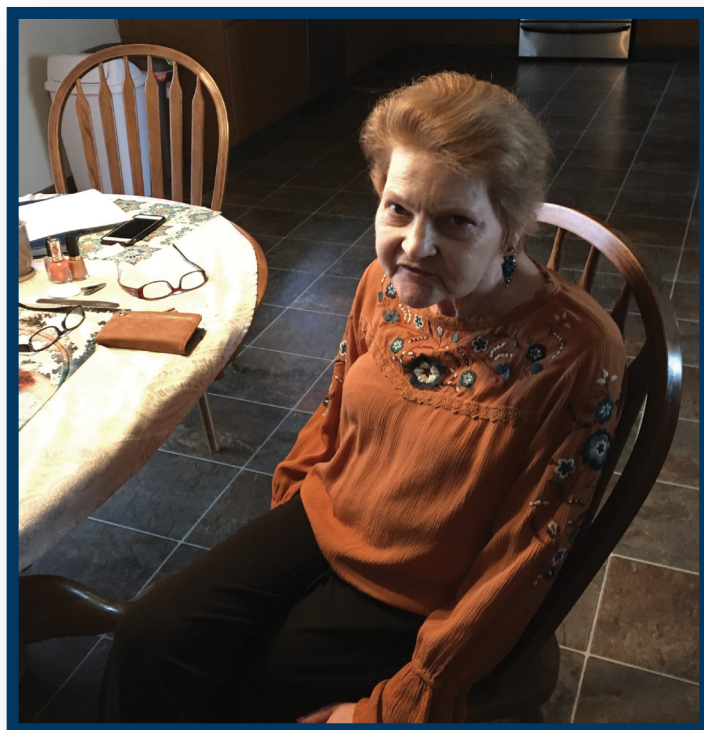


*"SEMCIL has let me take classes that I thought I would never get to do. It has been fun." – Chaz*

## TRANSITION: NURSING HOME RELOCATION

### Vivian's Story

In April 2017, Vivian was in the hospital, experiencing muscle weakness and unable to walk or stand. She was admitted to the Rose of Sharon nursing home in Roseville, MN, where she learned to use a wheelchair to get around. While at the nursing home, she was diagnosed with ALS, an autoimmune disorder. Vivian started physical and occupational therapy, and through hard work and dedication, she was able to increase her strength and start walking again. She credits her OT and PT with assisting her and working with her to make the gains that she did.



Vivian felt that she did not need all the care provided in the nursing home and she talked to the social worker about getting assistance to move. The social worker called the county for a MNCHOICES assessment, and in August Vivian was referred to MCIL for Nursing Home Relocation Services. She and a relocation coordinator from MCIL met and talked about what was important to her. She thought assisted living would be a good match for her due to her need for assistance. She wanted a home-like setting and to have her own private space. She wanted to be close to her daughter so that she could visit easily. She wanted a place that would allow her to have visitors. And she wanted a place that would allow her to be as independent as possible.

On November 7 Vivian moved into a new home. She said the process was “very good and helpful” and that it helped greatly by looking for places and taking her on tours. She got to look at different places and choose one that felt best. She said she couldn’t think of anything that she would have done differently. She was thankful for all the help she received packing up her belongings and moving out of the nursing home and into her own home.

Vivian says she likes her new place a lot. “People are very friendly and helpful,” she said. “I have privacy, my own room, and I can do crossword puzzles without having to take

them down every day. When I need help I get it.” She likes the new place because she “didn’t get lost in the shuffle.... You get lots of one-on-one time and get to know the staff. They care about you, they are not just putting in their time.” Her new home is a “nice environment for people”. Her boyfriend was able to spend Thanksgiving with her in her new home and he was allowed to spend the weekend. That made her very happy. Vivian said it isn’t perfect, and sometimes issues come up, but they always work things out, and she is happy in her new home.



### Meet Mark

Access North CIL staff first met Mark Kirchner in January 2014, just as he was starting his life over again. Recently divorced, after 33 years of marriage, he was distraught and struggling with depression.

Mark has severe dyslexia and has a hard time performing daily tasks such as reading mail, paying bills, and completing paperwork. Even things others take for granted, such as grocery shopping and reading food labels, were a real struggle. While he was married, his wife handled these things for the family, but after the divorce Mark struggled on his own. He was unemployed at the time, and had tried to start a small business with the assistance of the St. Cloud Workforce Center, but was unable to write the required business plan.

He lived in a cramped 20-foot travel trailer with no running water or septic system. He had built a small outhouse for himself and had to haul heavy jugs of water inside for cooking. His primary heat source was a propane heater in the camper, which was insufficient during winter months.

Mark's biggest frustration was the inability to read his daily mail. Mark and Access North staff started to explore options, including assistive technologies,

to help with this barrier. They continued to meet over the next year, working toward improving his living conditions and his independence in areas such as housing, paying bills, grocery shopping, completing and organizing paperwork, and voting. This assistance once moved Mark to tears and he told Access North that no other agency had been willing or able to help him without "the red tape and bureaucracy".

Finally, in 2016, after working through many barriers and frustrations, Mark secured a loan through Habitat for Humanity. With the help of volunteers, including friends and family with whom he had reconnected, Mark was able to build a home on his property.

For the first time in many years, he had a warm home with running water and many of the basic necessities that are so often taken for granted. Mark continues to work with different technologies to help him with daily tasks, although no one technology seems to do it all.

Mark has continued to work with Access North on furthering his independence and ability to access resources to sustain his independent living situation. In turn, Mark hopes to help others explore adaptive technologies that allow for reading and writing solutions.







### Southwestern Center for Independent Living: Veterans Program

The Southwestern Center for Independent Living (SWCIL) is a private, non-profit consumer controlled, non-residential, community based organization whose direction is determined by and for people with disabilities. Emphasis is placed on improving the quality of life for all people with disabilities who live in Southwestern Minnesota.

In 2010, SWCIL entered into a collaboration with the Sioux Falls Veteran's Administration Health Care System (VA-HCS), the State of Minnesota Board on Aging, and the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging to implement a pilot project called Veterans Directed Home and Community Based Services (VD-HCBS). The purpose of the VD-HCBS program is to provide a long term support system for veterans at risk of institutionalization. It is a person-centered, consumer-driven service used to access services and products that help qualified veterans continue to live in their homes and remain engaged in their communities. VD-HCBS is a flexible service option with a budget that allows veterans to identify their own needs, develop a plan to stay home, and directly employ their workers. Veterans can choose what help, supplies, and equipment they need, and can also choose who they want to provide help, including employing family members, friends, or neighbors.

The Sioux Falls VA-HCS is the access point for this service. The managing VA Community Health RN takes all referrals and determines whether a veteran is eligible. Once eligibility is established, a referral is made to SWCIL to provide assessment and case management services. Since the beginning of the VD-HCBS program out of the Sioux Falls VA-HCS, 28 veterans living in Minnesota have been served by this program. VD-HCBS is no longer a pilot program, but has been adopted as an ongoing program through the Sioux Falls, SD VA-HCS.



## SWCIL VETERANS PROGRAM

### Gus Elder: One Veteran's Story

My name is Guthrie (Gus) Elder, a retired 20-year United States Air Force Veteran. I am also the first Minnesota VD-HCBS participant. I am suffering with a terminal disease, ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis).

I am pleased to welcome this opportunity to say thank you to the Southwest Center for Independent Living organization, and particularly to one of your employees, Linda Halbur. She is the independent living services associate who coordinates my case management needs. Linda has been my case manager for the past seven years, and has done an outstanding job. She evaluates my progressive terminal disease for my increasing daily personal needs like setting a budget to be approved by Sioux Falls SD VA Medical Center. These reports remain error free. I feel very fortunate and blessed knowing I have an individual of Linda's caliber, with her professional job expertise coupled with her pleasant demeanor, representing me and allowing me the independence to live on my own.

I feel very fortunate to say that after I had been in this program for two years, the Social Services Department Supervisor at the Sioux Falls VA contacted me. They asked me about being a contact for other veterans interested in this program, since my program has been so successful.

## COLLABORATIONS

MNSILC has worked collaboratively with many partners. Working together to improve the ability of Minnesotans with disabilities to live independently benefits our entire community.

The following were instrumental in the work done by this council:

- Access North Center for Independent Living
- FREEDOM Resource Center for Independent Living
- Independent Lifestyles, Inc. - A Center for Independent Living
- Metropolitan Center for Independent Living
- OPTIONS Interstate Resource Center for Independent Living
- Southern Minnesota Independent Living Enterprises and Services
- Southeast Center for Independent Living
- Southwestern Center for Independent Living
- Department of Employment and Economic Development
  - Vocational Rehabilitation Services
  - State Services for the Blind
- Minnesota Council on Disabilities
- State Rehabilitation Council-General
- State Rehabilitation Council-Blind
- Olmstead Implementation Office

### Did you know?

Minnesota's eight Centers for Independent Living (CILs) provide a wealth of services and programs to help Minnesotans with disabilities achieve their goals to live and work independently in their communities.

- **People can live happier, healthier, more productive lives.** When people have independence, they work, pay taxes, and spend money in our communities – all at a lower Medicaid cost.
- **People can live in communities of their choice with the supports they need** rather than in nursing homes or other institutional living situations.

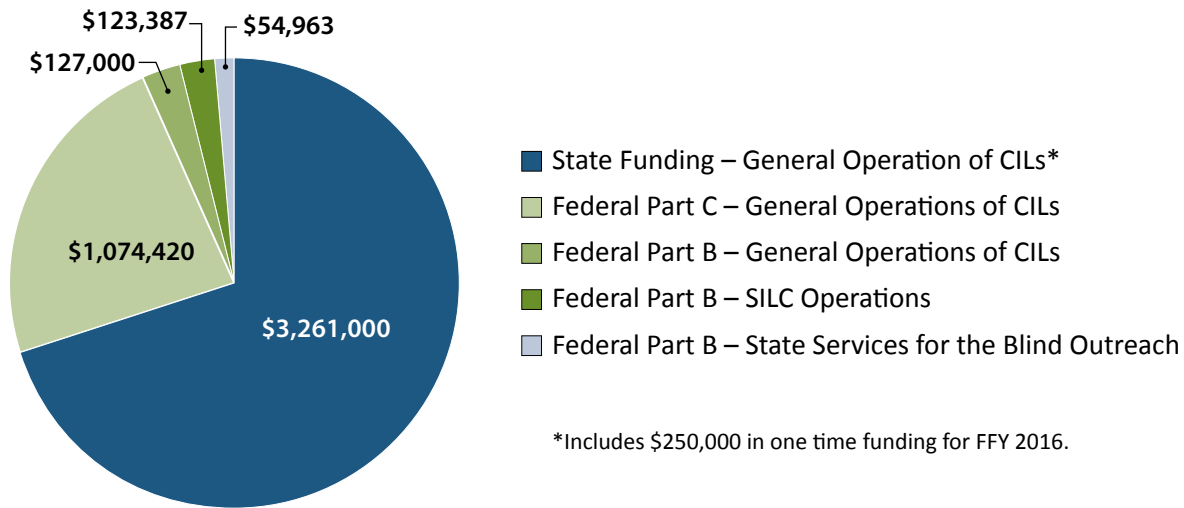
**Centers for Independent Living save the government millions of dollars each year.**

- **In 2017 the CILs assisted 73 people with disabilities living in a nursing home to relocate to an independent living situation** by providing all the necessary services and supports to create and maintain independent living in the community. This resulted in a savings in state Medicaid dollars of \$7,009,533 for the 73 consumers. Average daily Medical Assistance rate for a nursing home stay averages \$96,021 per year.
- The CILs also helped to prevent the placement of 1,655 people with disabilities in a nursing home or other skilled facility by providing instrumental services and support to help the individual with a disability preserve maximum possible independence in their home. Savings in Medicaid dollars to Minnesota for these 1,655 individuals is \$158,914,755.

*Note: The numbers used reflect data collected from October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017 by the eight Minnesota Centers for Independent Living.*

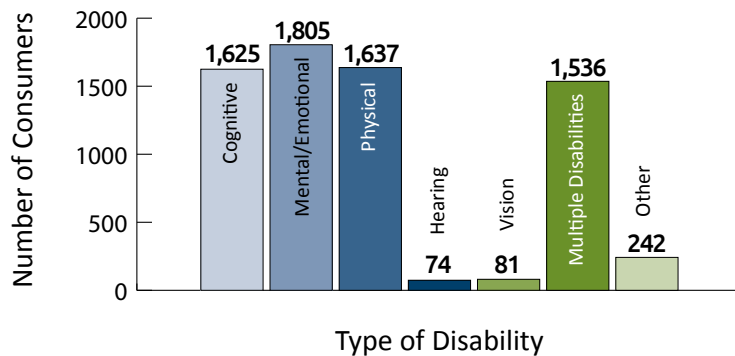
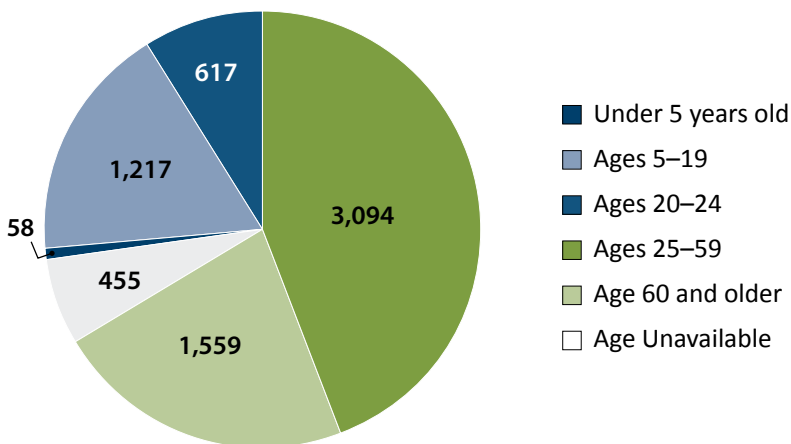


## Independent Living Funding Distribution

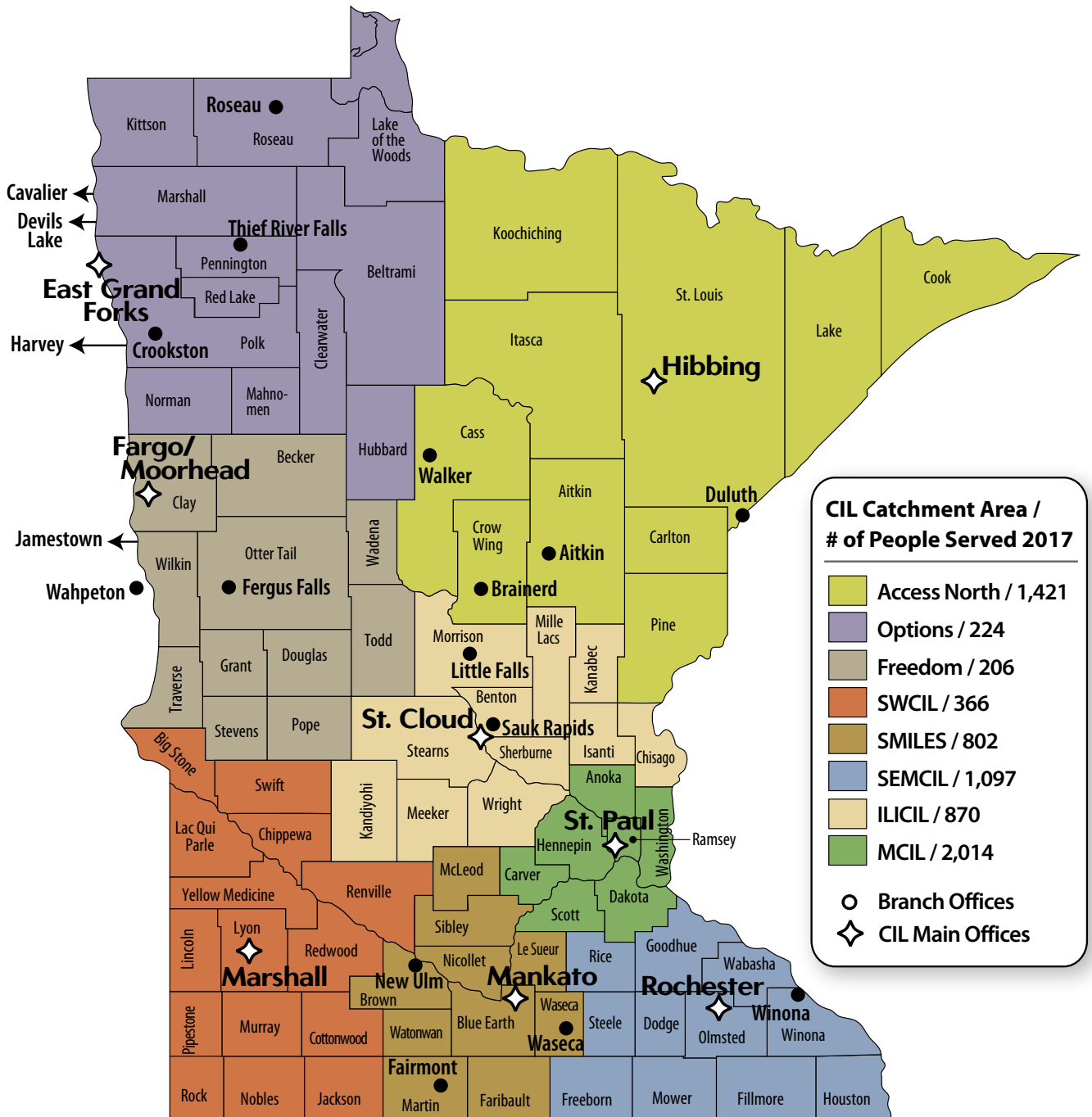


## Total Number of People Served by Centers for Independent Living

In FFY 2017, 7,000 individuals were served by Minnesota's eight CILs which provided a total 43,368 received services, including the Independent Living (IL) core services.



## BY THE NUMBERS



For more information about the  
Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council

Go to: [mn.gov/deed/silc](http://mn.gov/deed/silc) or [mnsilc1215@gmail.com](mailto:mnsilc1215@gmail.com)  
or call: Pam Taylor, Coordinator at 612-518-1497

Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities.

Contact: [Brad.Westerlund@state.mn.us](mailto:Brad.Westerlund@state.mn.us)  
651.259.7351 | 1.800.328.9095 | TTY 651-296-3900 | Fax 651-297-5159